PHARMACARE NEWSLETTER

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Web site: http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/pharme/index.html

PLEASE CIRCULATE AMONG DISPENSING STAFF

Pharmacare Coverage Changes

Effective January 1, 2002, there will be changes to Pharmacare coverage affecting Plan A (Seniors) and Plan E ("Universal"). These changes are being made in response to escalating costs and the need to protect the future viability of the Pharmacare program. The changes are as follows:

Plan A (Seniors)

- Seniors coverage will be separated into:
  - a regular Plan A
  - a Plan A for Seniors receiving Premium Assistance from the Medical Services Plan (MSP) or B.C. Benefits from the Ministry of Human Resources (MHR).
- The annual maximum payable for regular Plan A patients will be $275. Patients will be required to pay a maximum of $25 towards the total cost (drug cost and dispensing fee) of each prescription until the patient reaches the $275 maximum amount. For prescriptions with a total cost of $25 or less, the patient will be required to pay the full amount.
- The annual maximum payable for seniors receiving MSP Premium Assistance or B.C. Benefits through MHR will be $200. Patients will be required to pay a maximum of $10 towards the total cost (drug cost and dispensing fee) of each prescription until the $200 maximum is reached. For prescriptions with a total cost of $10 or less, the patient will be required to pay the full amount.
- The amount paid by a Senior toward drug costs of eligible benefits and dispensing fees will count towards the maximum payable amount.
- Pharmacare will continue to cover 100% of eligible drug costs and dispensing fees once the senior has reached the maximum payable amount.
- Pharmacare will continue to pay the dispensing fee for trial quantities of drugs included in the Trial Prescription Program.
- Pharmacare will continue to provide 100% coverage of methadone costs (drug costs and dispensing fees) for seniors.

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Plan E (Universal)

- The Plan E annual deductible will change to $1000 for regular Plan E patients. When a family has reached the $1000 deductible, Pharmacare will continue to cover 70% of the cost of eligible benefits and dispensing fees. Once a family has paid $2000 as their portion, further eligible expenses in that year will be covered 100%.
- For Plan E patients receiving MSP Premium Assistance, the deductible will be $800. When a family has paid $800 as their portion, further eligible expenses in that year are covered 100%.

Advance announcement of these changes may prompt patients to acquire additional supplies before the changes are implemented. Please remain aware of the rules regarding refills and maximum days' supply. Regular audits will continue, as usual, to monitor prescribing and dispensing practices.